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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 02, 2009

Summary: Reports on national political developments continued to dominate headlines on the second consecutive day in all the newspapers. Reports and photographs of the visit of the U.S. Congressional delegation lead by Senator Carl Levin received prominent media coverage in several major dailies. Newspapers highlighted reports that President Zardari "urged the United States to expedite reimbursement of outstanding \$1.6 billion Coalition Support Fund (CSF)." The English language daily, "Dawn," reported that the U.S. senators "expressed concern over the law and order situation in Balochistan." Newspapers highlighted reports that an unnamed State Department official declared Dr. A.Q. Khan as a "serious proliferation risk." Reports of the "killing of at least 40 suspected militants in a new military offensive in the Bara area of Khyber Agency" received prominent display. Along with the story, all major dailies also reported that "105 Taliban militants laid down arms in Swat valley."

Most major Urdu language dailies ran editorials on national political themes and issues. However, some English language dailies penned editorials on issues of international concern. Commenting on the recent remarks of the U.S. General McChrystal, the center-right national English daily "The Nation," noted that his "tacit admission that the occupation is a failure should be heeded both in foreign capitals and by his bosses." Likewise, the prestigious English language daily, "Dawn," observed that "America is on the horns of dilemma. The more troops it sends to Afghanistan the more it gets bogged down in Afghanistan and suffers high casualties." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"Zardari Asks US To Fulfill Commitments" "The News" (09/02)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday called upon the United States to expedite work on the reimbursement of \$1.6 billion outstanding payments in Coalition Support Fund (CSF), passage of the Kerry-Lugar Bill, legislation to set up Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (RoZs) in the war affected areas, assistance in energy sector, the \$2.5 billion plan for the rehabilitation of IDPs and reconstruction in the militancy-hit areas."

"US Senators Raise Balochistan Issue" "Dawn" (09/02)

"Three US senators called on President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday and expressed concern over the law and order situation in Balochistan. According to sources, Senators Carl Levin and Jack Reed

of the US Senate's Armed Services Committee and Edward Kaufman of the Foreign Relations Committee stressed the need for complete peace in Balochistan and asked the government to settle all outstanding issues with the Baloch people."

"A. Q. Khan Still Poses Risk: US" "Dawn" (09/02)

"Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan 'remains a serious proliferation risk,' a US official said on Tuesday after the scientist gained freedom of movement."

"Restrictions Lifted: AQ Khan" "Daily Times" (09/02)

"Nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan on Tuesday said restrictions on his movements had been lifted."

"40 Killed In Bara Operation" "Dawn" (09/02)

"At least 40 suspected militants were killed and 43 others captured in a new military offensive in the Bara area of Khyber tribal region on Tuesday."

"105 Lay Down Arms In Swat" "Dawn" (09/02)

"One hundred and five militants, a number of local Taliban commanders among them, laid down arms and surrendered while 15 militants were killed in clashes with security forces in Swat on Tuesday."

"Troops Take On Militants In Bara" "The News" (09/02)

"At least nine suspected militants were confirmed dead as security forces launched a massive operation in the Bara sub-division of Khyber Agency on Tuesday."

"Lack Of Assault Choppers Hampering Pak Efforts" "The Nation" (09/02)

"Pakistan's anti-terrorism efforts are seriously hampered by lack of assault helicopters such as Cobra and Apache and the United States' inability to ensure adequate supply of spare parts to Islamabad's existing choppers fleet. 'The US has provided some Cobra helicopters to Pakistan which it has used effectively in the tribal areas and Malakand division in fight against the aliban militants but Islamabad has asked for more choppers from Washington as the existing ones are insufficient to carry on the war on terror successfully,' said an official desiring not to be named."

"Envoy Review Situation In Afghanistan, Pakistan Today" "Dawn" (09/02)

"International special envoys for Pakistan and Afghanistan are meeting in Paris on Wednesday to review current situation in the two countries, the US State Department said."

"NA Committee Asks Govt To Re-Examine Blasphemy Law" "Daily Times" (09/02)

"National Assembly's Standing Committee on Human Rights urged the government to re-examine the blasphemy law and improve its procedure."

"Pak 'terror infrastructure' intact: India" "Daily Times" (09/02)

"India claimed on Tuesday the terror infrastructure used to carry out the Mumbai terror attacks last year is 'intact across the border' - a reference to Pakistan. 'That is my complaint against Pakistan and that is my disappointment with Pakistan,' Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram told a press conference. He also accused Pakistan of not being serious in punishing the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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"The Mcchrystal Report," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/02)

". . . General McChrystal's tacit admission that the occupation is a failure should be heeded both in foreign capitals and by his bosses. The only real solution to the problems of Afghanistan comes from ending the current foreign occupation, not increasing it, as General McChrystal will propose. Though General McChrystal pays lip service to the Afghan people, he does not pay any attention to their untrammelled desire for freedom to live their lives as they wish, a desire which does not seem to have been broken by the US occupation."

"US General's Views," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/02)

"America is on the horns of a dilemma. The more troops it sends to Afghanistan the more it gets bogged down in Afghanistan and suffers high casualties. . . Hamid Karzai is not the man who can pull America's chestnuts out of the fire and lead Afghanistan to peace. His regime has corrupt warlords and Afghanistan is the world's leading drug producer. This means that Washington must seriously probe the possibility of talking to moderate Taliban and prepare a credible exit strategy."

"Proposal To Change American Strategy In Afghanistan," an editorial in center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (09/02)

"Coalition forces commander in Afghanistan General Stanley McChrystal has stressed upon the western world to change its Afghanistan strategy if it wants to win the war against militants.... America appears puzzled because on one hand NATO is not willing to send more troops to Afghanistan and on the other the bid to expand military and police force in Afghanistan hasn't been successful. In such a scenario, initiation of talks with Afghanistan's real forces should be considered. . . Pakistan should also continue efforts for talks with the Taliban."

"Will The US Leave Afghanistan," an op-ed by Irfan Asghar in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/02)

". . . The US must not be oblivious of the fact that it will be impossibly difficult for it to prolong its stay in 'the Graveyard of Empires' as its costs are going through the roof in Afghanistan whereas the outcome remains uncertain. Everybody knows that war is an uncertain business. Between 2001 and 2009, military operations in Afghanistan have burned \$200bn of the US treasury. Additionally, if the number of deaths rises, the American public will run out of patience. Resultantly, Obama's job will become harder. In the wake of launching a major operation in recent months in the Helmand, the US has suffered the highest casualties of the eight-year-old war. Obama must not lose sight of the point that Afghanistan could be for him what Iraq was for Bush or even what Vietnam was for Johnson. It is high time for Obama to lift a major step, reverse the course and leave Afghanistan otherwise it will be next to impossible to save the day."

"Afghanistan's Electoral Gridlock" an op-ed by Asif Ezdi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/02)

". . . Tensions between the U.S. authorities and Karzai could escalate after the election if, as expected, Washington increases pressure on Karzai to take steps to improve government effectiveness and fight corruption. Washington has been emphasising the importance of good governance in waging a successful counterinsurgency campaign and would like to see such institutional reform measures as the creation of a post of Prime Minister and the appointment of civilian advisers in important ministries. But Karzai and his supporters are said to be resisting these changes. . . Either way, Karzai will be without the strong public mandate he needs to become the head of an effective government and to pursue reconciliation with the Taliban. He will also find the Americans breathing down his neck harder than ever."

"Vile Propaganda Against Armed Forces," an op-ed by Sajjad Shaukat in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (09/02)

"Pakistan's armed forces have achieved a landmark victory by dismantling the command and control system of the Taliban in Swat, Dir and Buner and other adjoining areas. This fact was witnessed in the recent weeks, when renowned militant commanders were captured, and most of them surrendered. But our misfortune is that some external and internal elements have always acted upon a deliberate propaganda campaign against the security forces under one or the other pretext. As regards external elements, the U.S. and some western countries who had been criticizing Pakistan's armed forces in the past, underestimating its capabilities by remarking that the Taliban insurgents would occupy Islamabad took a u-turn. In this respect, quite contrary to their previous misperceived approach, American and western high officials have been highly appreciating Pakistan's forces, donating million of dollars for the IDPs. Besides high officials of UK and other European countries, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke and US Central Command (CENTCOM) Chief Gen David Petraeus admired the determination of Pakistan's armed forces in achieving quick success against the insurgents."

"Ramazan In The U.S," an op-ed by Tanveer Qaiser Shahid in the liberal national Urdu daily "Express" (circ. 25,000)

"It is due to the ever increasing Muslim population that every year at the onset of Ramazan, the U.S. President sends out a message of felicitation and also holds an Iftar for a select group of Muslims. You can well imagine what a [wonderful] scene it must be to hear Allah and the Prophet's name resounding in the White House. The U.S. President also does not forget to greet Muslims at the time of Eid. In fact, the U.S. government has even issued a beautiful stamp bearing the words 'Eid Mubarak' in beautiful calligraphy. We feel that such acts by the U.S. leaders deserve praise."  
Patterson